

From Nose Rings to Bifocals: Developing Life-long Arts Patrons

A model for attracting young audiences and building audience retention. In other words: how to enable cult brand relationships for all ages.

Secrets to Cultivating Young Professionals

1. Form a council or advisory board of people from the target demo to be your brainstorm/feedback body. They have to feel like they have ownership in the brand, like they discovered it.
2. Everything sold to them, be it tickets, merchandise, fundraising, or subscriptions, needs to be sold to them in their language. It needs to be hip, current, and relevant. Your company can have more than one brand.
3. Because they're so used to being sold to and can deconstruct every commercial they see, there has to be added value to our product that enhances why they should attend your performance or join your membership group. General enlightenment, feeling good about yourself, it's entertaining, etc. just isn't enough. The social factor is vital.

Vivace/Studio D/Young Benefactor members have a relationship with the group and then by extension, the parent company. They feel they are members of the group for life, not just while they are young. These three groups are now cult brands for them. The councils talk to everyone they know about the groups, they sell for us.

What if all staff did that? All volunteers? All patrons? Borrow the LDS Church's motto of: "Every Member a Missionary." Everything we do should be about Audience Development. Subscriptions are not dead, they just need relationships with us to be built in rather than just providing the concert or having them come to the museum whenever. Doug Kinzey's advice:

1. Define Audience Development and marketing organizationally. Not just as one single department's job.
2. Align organizational structure in support of audience development (create an Ambassadors program)
3. Drive Ticket Sales as a by-product of customer relevant branding (Don't try to force patrons on a pre-determined continuum but let them determine the route they want to go on)
4. Focus on Listening (create a feedback system/advisory councils) and Relationship Appreciation (create rewards programs)

Social Initiators & Culturally Aware Non-Attendees (CANAs)

□ CANAs:

- i. defined as adults who have not attended a classical concert in two years but have attended other performing arts events, museums, or art galleries. Statistically they are 43 years of age, 35% fall into the 18-34 bracket, 56% female, half subscribe to at least one daily newspaper, but favor home/food/fashion over arts and culture. They can tell you about the hottest whatever, 40% believe they'd enjoy a classical concert; mean to go to concerts, just don't get around to it.

- ii. Three reasons they don't go: it's difficult to find time, it's difficult to make a commitment, tickets cost too much (last point is most common with CANAs)
- iii. Article recommends ticket of \$20-25
- iv. CANAs are intimidated by the concert hall
- V. CANAs are in search of activities that offer more enlightenment than the average Hollywood spectacle, that have some added value or are rich in interpretive content.
- vi. "Sometimes Culturally Awares are just waiting for an invitation from their local initiator, that person in their social circle who takes charge of scouting out activities, forwards the e-mail invites, and follows up to make sure everyone has the details.
- vii. who invites you to a concert has as much to do with your decision to attend as other factors such as the program, guest artists, etc.

□ SOCIAL INITIATORS STUDY:

- i. many potential attendees are sitting at home waiting for someone to invite them. These are "responders"
- ii. "initiators" - are the glue that holds together your audience, they recommend your product to friends
- iii. In the Classical Music Consumer Segmentation Study (survey of culturally active adults) 18% identified as Initiators whereas 56% were identified as Responders
- iv. 2002 survey of 15 orchestras found only 11% of initiators among subscribers and only 13% of single-ticket buyers were initiators; i.e. less initiators among the orchestra audience than among the culturally aware audience
- v. Knight Foundation article: perhaps the subscription marketing relationship which requires advance commitment and hefty sums of money paid up-front is not conducive to initiating
- vi. Demographics of Initiators:
 - 1. twice as likely as non initiators to be very interested in attending orchestra concerts
 - 2. There are more likely to be "extremely interested" in arts activities generally
 - 3. They are more likely to say that arts activities play a major role in their lives
 - 4. They attend significantly more arts events
 - 5. They actively scan the media for things to do
 - 6. more likely to be very interested in learning more about classical music
 - 7. more likely to be single, younger, female, and African-American or Hispanic
- vii. how to find initiators: viral marketing (add facebook like buttons to your site!), harness word-of-mouth through ambassadors, add a social element (so that YOUR ORGANIZATION becomes the social initiator inviting you to join in, MLM-like sales person activities, group sales through your website?, etc.

Sources:

Knight Foundation Issues Brief #4 | Initiators & Responders: A New Way to View Orchestra Audiences

"Stalking the Culturally Aware Non-Attender" SYMPHONY Magazine | Jan - Feb 2004